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PSC 595.01: Legislative Relations

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Political Science 595
Legislative Relations

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Course Description:

This course introduces the student to the workings of the legislative branch of government. The course focuses on understanding the functions of the legislative branch with special attention given to drafting proposed legislation.

Course Objectives:

1. To acquire substantive knowledge and understanding of the workings of the legislative branch of government.
2. To develop the skills and abilities to establish working relations with legislators and their staff.

Required Readings:

There are required readings for each lesson. The required readings are found under the "Course Materials" icon for this class.

Course Requirements:

Lessons must be completed each Wednesday night by 7 pm (MST). Students are required to read the mini-lectures, all assigned readings, participate on the discussion board, and complete all writing assignments by the established times. Lessons provide summary points based on what the instructor is trying to emphasize as key elements for the student to learn and understand. These are not to be considered all-inclusive and the student is responsible for using these summary points in developing their understanding.

All time requirements for discussion board answers, papers, and projects will be based on Mountain Standard Time. The instructor will be online reviewing student responses to discussion board questions each Wednesday night from 7 to 9 pm (MST).

Writing Assignments

Five writing assignments are required. The first and second writing assignments are to be three to five page in length, double-spaced. The third writing assignment is your proposed draft legislation and the fourth is your testimony both pro and con. The fifth is a completed fiscal note. Students are required to follow the instructions contained in the relevant lesson for each assignment.

Course Grading:

Grading will be based on your Discussion Board Responses and writing assignments. Each writing assignment is worth 50 points and Discussion Board Responses are worth 100 points for the semester, for a total of 350 points. Discussion Board points will be available at the end of the semester. If you are curious as to how you are doing on your Discussion Board questions during the semester, you may call or email the instructor.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

A =	326-350
A- =	315-325
B+ =	305-314
B =	291-304
B- =	280-290
C+ =	270-279
C =	256-269

Weekly Assignments

Lesson 1 (Due 30 August 2006) Introduction to Legislative Relations

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Reading:

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 2, Pages 2-6, Appendix B: Glossary of Commonly Used Terms, Pages 106-109; Appendix C: Acronyms and Abbreviations, Page 110

Lesson 2 (Due 6 September 2006) The Legislative Branch

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Reading:

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 3, Pages 7-20

Writing Assignment #1 Due – Write a 3 to 5 page paper outlining the duties and responsibilities of the various offices of the Legislature.

Lesson 3 (Due 13 September 2006) The Legislature

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Readings:

American Politics and Government, Barbary Hinckley, Sheldon Goldman, Pages 75-79

Understanding Intergovernmental Relations, Deil Wright, Pages 281-295
Democracy Under Pressure, Milton Cummings Jr., David Wise, Pages 677-679
Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 5, Pages 27-30,
Chapter 8, Pages 59-69, Chapter 12, Pages 91-93

Lesson 4 (Due 20 September 2006) Understanding Ethics

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Readings:

Right and Wrong: A Brief Guide To Understanding Ethics, Thomas White, Pages 5-16, 39-56,
and 59-76.

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 4, Pages 21-26

Lesson 5 (Due 27 September 2006) The Triad of Integrity

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Reading:

Splitting the Difference: Compromise and Integrity in Ethics and Politics, Martin Benjamin,
Pages 46-72

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 6, pages 31-38

YOUR IDEA FOR PROPOSED LEGISLATION DUE TODAY!

Writing Assignment #2 Due – Write a 3 to 5 page paper regarding the importance of *ethics* and *integrity* to both legislators and those who relate with them.

Lesson 6 (Due 4 October 2006) Understanding Decision Making

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Readings:

Public Administration: Concepts and Cases, Richard Stillman, Pages 220-224

Public Administration: Policy, Politics, and Practice, William Johnson, Pages 319-333

Classics of Public Administration, Jay Shafritz, Albert Hyde, Pages 224-234

Lesson 7 (Due 11 October 2006) Special Interest Groups / Political Action Committees /
Lobbying

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the discussion Board Questions.

Readings:

American Politics and Government, Barbara Hinckley, Sheldon Goldman, Pages 125-156

Democracy Under Pressure, Milton Cummings Jr., David Wise, Pages 224-221

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 10, Pages 80-84,
Chapter 13, Pages 94-97

Lesson 8 (Due 18 October 2006) Legislative Process – Bill Drafting

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Readings:

We the People of Montana..., Lopach, McKinsey, Payne, Waldron, Calvert, Brown, Pages 70-81

Bill Drafting Manual 2006, Montana Legislative Services Division, Pages 1-76

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 7, Pages 39-58

Lesson 9 (Due 25 October 2006) Legislative Process – Bill Drafting

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

Reading:

Bill Drafting Manual 2006, Montana Legislative Services Division, Pages 77-163

Lesson 10 (Due 1 November 2006) Fiscal Notes for Legislation

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE (BILL) PROPOSAL DUE TODAY!
DRAFT FISCAL NOTE DUE TODAY!

Reading:

Fiscal Note Preparation Manual, OBBP

Lesson 11 (Due 8 November 2006) Legislative Protocol and Testimony in Committees

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.

DRAFT TESTIMONY DUE TODAY – PRO AND CON

Reading:

Legislator Handbook 2005, Montana Legislative Services Division, Chapter 9, Pages 79

Lesson 12 (Due 15 November 2006) Budget and the Legislature / EPP Process

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions

FINAL LEGISLATIVE (BILL) PROPOSAL DUE TODAY!

Lesson 13 (Due 22 November 2006)

No mini-lecture or Discussion Board Questions today.

FINAL TESTIMONY DUE TODAY – PRO AND CON

Lesson 14 (Due 29 November 2006) Voting

Read the bills presented. Read the testimony for and against each bill. Cast your vote.

Lesson 15 (Due 6 December 2006) Summary and Conclusion

Read the mini-lecture on-line and respond to the Discussion Board Questions.